



PHOTO BY MARK WASHINGTON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Long time mentor and coach Roy Pittman and John Canda (right), an expert in anti-gang efforts who is employed in Mayor Tom Potter's office, discuss issues related to youth violence during a student forum at the Blazers Boys and Girls Club on Northeast Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard.

Advocates Tackle Youth Violence

continued from Front

He also noted it that taking action in February will hopefully lessen chances for trouble in the summer heat.

"We are taking a giant step forward now in making sure kids are aware of what the rules are," he said.

To emphasize such rules and expectations, Pittman invited representatives from businesses and organizations that affect youth—a mall security manager, Nike corporate employee and a TriMet representative.

The volunteer-run group doesn't have a name and they don't receive any funding. As a think tank of sorts, they share information from their everyday lives, and with each meeting generate more ideas as to how they can impact teens' abilities to make better choices.

Member Jeremie Mitchell became involved because, as manager of Lloyd Center's security, he

has spent the past eight years observing teen behavior at one of Portland's biggest gathering spots.

Portland Police Sgt. George Weatheroy brings to the group a hope of reducing the tension between youth and law enforcement.

The group has met a dozen

a focus on social expectations, addressing specific issues of violence and theft at the mall and acceptable behavior on TriMet.

North Portland's Rosemary Anderson School was one of two alternative high schools invited to the half-day event.

Watching a presentation from the back of one of the classrooms, the high school's education director Charlene Williams nodded in approval as her students remained engaged even after hours spent listening to adults.

"There were some candid conversations today," she said. "The city is making themselves more of an ally in the community, instead of an enemy."

Canda said he was pleased with the day's events.

"I have watched you all day and I have to say I like what I see," he told the students.

The group's next step is to evaluate the program's formula and hopefully introduce middle school students into the mix next time around.

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—education director Charlene Williams

times so far and earlier this month wrapped up their first objective, a youth forum for students of two alternative high schools hosted by the Blazers Boys and Girls Club.

The "Making Positive Choices" forum brought in presenters to lead discussions on sexual education, peer pressure, racism and domestic violence. They closed the day with

Black History Fun at Dishman

Celebrate Black History Month with an evening of food, music, poetry and arts and crafts at the Matt Dishman Center, Saturday, Feb. 24.

Joe "Bean" Keller will emcee the evening, introducing the Matt Dishman Dance Team, No Kidding Choir, a

poetry reading by Tim Phillips and Esprit Hodge and music from P.O. Soul Entertainment Group.

Also, browse the African American Art Gallery presented by Artissa and learn more about Portland's origins when Ray Leary delivers a special presen-

tation of the city formerly known as Vanport.

This free event takes place from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Matt Dishman Community Center, 77 N.E. Knott St. For more information, call Robert Donaldson at 503-823-5200 or 503-407-2035.

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In celebration of Black History Month, the Port of Portland recognizes past and present contributions of African Americans to the diversity of our city, state and nation.

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